

The Love of God

Text: 1 Cor. 13:1-13; 1 John 4:7-10

Introduction: Jerry Reed, a country-western singer, wrote this about LOVE...

*Six foot six he stood on the ground, Weighed two hundred and thirty five pounds
But I saw that giant of a man brought down, To his knees by love*

*He was the kind of man would gamble on luck, Look you in the eye & never back up
But I saw him cryin' like a little whipped pup, Because of love*

*Can't see it with your eyes hold it in your hand, But like the wind that covers our land
Strong enough to rule the heart of any man, This thing called love*

*It can lift you up, it can let you down, Take your world turn it all around
Ever since time nothings ever been found, Stronger than love*

*Most men are like me they struggle in doubt, trouble their minds day in & day out
Too busy with livin' to worry about, A word called love*

*But when I see a mother's tenderness, As she holds her young close to her breast
Than I thank God this world's been blessed, With a word called love*

*Can't see it with your eyes hold it in your hand, But like the wind it covers our land
Strong enough to rule the heart of any man, This thing called love*

*It can lift you up, it can let you down, Take your world turn it all around
Ever since time nothings ever been found, Stronger than love*

Listen to the experts:

(Wendy, age 8) "When a person gets kissed for the first time, they fall down and they don't get up for at least an hour."

(Arnold, age 10) "Mooshy ... like puppy dogs ... except puppy dogs don't wag their tails nearly as much."

(Shem, age 8) "All of sudden, the people get movie's fever so they can sit together in the dark."

When asked why love happens between two particular people:

(Andrew, age 6) "One of the people has freckles and so he finds somebody else who has freckles too."

(Mae, age 7) "No one is sure why it happens, but I heard it has something to do with how you smell. That's why perfume and deodorant are so popular."

(Manuel, age 8) "I think you're supposed to get shot with an arrow or

something, but the rest of it isn't supposed to be so painful."

When asked on what falling in love is like:

(John, age 9) "Like an avalanche where you have to run for your life."

(Glenn, age 7) "If falling in love is anything like learning how to spell, I don't want to do it. It takes too long."

Some surefire ways to make a person fall in love with you:

(Del, age 6) "Tell them that you own a whole bunch of candy stores."

(Manuel, age 8) "Tell out that you love them at the top of your lungs and don't worry if their parents are right there."

(Alonzo, age 9) "Don't do things like have smelly, green sneakers. You might get attention, but attention ain't the same thing as love."

(Bart, age 9) "One way is to take the girl out to eat. Make sure it's something she likes to eat. French Fries usually work for me."

How can you tell if two adults at a Restaurant are in love?

(Bobby, age 9) "Just see if the man picks up the check. That's how you can tell if he's in love."

(Bart, age 9) "Lovers will just be staring at each other and their food will get cold. Other people care more about their food."

(Sandra, age 7) "See if the man has lipstick on his face."

(Christine, age 9) "It's love if they order one of those desserts that are on fire. They like to order those because it just like how their hearts are – on fire."

Note – Perhaps the reason we are so unsure about love in these days is because we do not know God...You see, one of the first characteristics we must understand about God is that He is love!

Note – God does not *attain* love and then *maintain* love—love is the structure of His being. Yet His love does not contradict His holiness or truth, it is subordinate to these.

I. God's Love Is Revealed – verses 8-9

A. In His Word – verse 8

- God is Love

Ephesians 5:2 *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.*

III – Getting a love letter... or CARD!

B. Through His Son

Quote – *Love has been defined as meeting the needs of another that the person cannot meet for themselves.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

II. God's Love Is Redemptive – verse 9-10

A. Redeems Us from Our Sin

Romans 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*

Note – In the matters of love and salvation, God is the "Prime mover." Man was not seeking God; Adam was not seeking God; think of Noah's generation and now our generation.

1. Not that we loved God, but He loved us. – verse 10
2. He sent His son to be a propitiation.

III – Blood on the Mercy Seat

III – Song – "What Can Wash Away My Sin?"

Note – Here we see His love subordinate to His Righteousness

Romans 3:25 *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

B. Redeems Us for a New Purpose – verse 9

Note – That we might live through Him

1 John 3:1 *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

III. God's Love Is Reassuring

III – It doesn't matter how long you've been married, or known a loved one. It's good to be reassured.

A. His Love Is Our Foundation. – verse 16

Dwell = abide in spiritual oneness.

Note – What a blessing to build our relationships on the foundation that God is in us!

Ephesians 3:17 *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love...*

B. His Love Removes Fear. – verses 17-18

Note – God is on our side!

Romans 8:31-39 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

III – **G. Campbell Morgan** read **Matthew 28** to ladies in a rest home: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end..."

--Morgan said, "Isn't that a wonderful promise?"

--A lady responded, "No, it's a wonderful reality!"

Note – No matter what trials etc. we may experience, God's love abounds. "He is a very present help in time of trouble!"

Note – The closer we get to God—the more love we express to others. God’s will for us is that the love He revealed on the Cross would be perfected in the believer.

1 Thess. 4:9 *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*

III – The outpouring of love at FBC is not a manifestation of fearful servants but of the love of God through us.

2 Cor. 5:14 *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:*

III – A missionary to the Philippines visited a man with leprosy who offered him some dried fruit. Risking leprosy, the missionary reached in and received the fruit. Later, the leper got saved.

Conclusion:

- His Love is Revealed – God loves you
- His Love is Redemptive – Jesus died for you
- His Love is Reassuring – He will never leave you

III – A farmer printed on his weather vane the words “God is love.” Someone asked him if he meant to imply that the love of God was as fickle as the wind. The farmer answered, “No, I mean that whichever way the wind blows, God is love. If it blows cold from the north, or biting from the east, God is still love just as much as when the warm south or gentle west winds refresh our fields and flocks. God is always love.”

When we love we not only have an **object** but also an **objective**.

There was a story in Reader’s Digest about a fellow that was attending a junior stock show when a grand-champion lamb, owned by a little girl, was being auctioned. As the bids reached five dollars per pound, the little girl, standing beside the lamb in the arena, began to cry. At ten dollars, the tears were streaming down her face and she clasped her arms tightly around the lamb’s neck. The higher the bids rose, the more she cried. Finally, a local businessman bought the lamb for more than \$1000, but then announced that he was donating it to the little girl. The crowd applauded and cheered.

Months later, the same fellow was judging some statewide essays when he came across one from a girl who told about the time her grand-champion lamb had been auctioned. “The prices began to get so high during the bidding,” she wrote, “that I started to cry from happiness.” She continued with: “The man who bought the lamb for so much more than I ever dreamed I would get returned the lamb to me, and when I got home, Daddy barbecued the lamb--and it was really delicious.”

The local businessman had an object of his love and compassion and an objective to his love and compassion, although misled by the object and misled in the objective. Yet, in any case and every case, love always has both an object and objective and the objective has the benefit of the object in mind.

When the Bible tells us to love one another, the idea is that we are to reach out to others in way that benefits others. Loving one another is reaching out to others in a time of need. It is being there for them and with them when they need us the most. It is reaching out to them in a time and way whereby they receive from our expression of love that which helps and benefits them.

I think of a study that Rene Spitz did of the absence of parental affection. In a South American orphanage, Spitz observed and recorded what happened to 97 children who were deprived of emotional and physical contact with others. Because of a lack of funds, there was not enough staff to adequately care for these children, ages 3 months to 3 years old. Nurses changed diapers and fed and bathed the children. But there was little time to hold, cuddle, and talk to them as a mother would. After three months many of them showed signs of abnormality. Besides a loss of appetite and being unable to sleep well, many of the children lay with a vacant expression in their eyes. After five months, serious deterioration set in.

They lay whimpering, with troubled and twisted faces. Often, when a doctor or nurse would pick up an infant, it would scream in terror. Twenty seven, almost one third, of the children died the first year, but not from lack of food or health care. They died of a lack of touch and emotional nurture. Because of this, seven more died the second year. Only twenty one of the 97 survived; most suffering serious psychological damage.

What Rene Spitz found was that children need and are greatly benefited by parental affection. That is true for everyone – children or adults. Everyone needs to be loved and shown love. Everyone benefits from being loved and shown love. When we are told to love another, it is more than a command to obey. It is something that needs to be practiced. Love always has an objective and that objective is the need of love and the benefits received from our love.